

Reenvision Your Optometry Career

By Aria Care Partners



Going Beyond the Clinic: Mobile, Freelance, and Travel Optometrist Positions

For decades, the traditional Optometry career followed a familiar blueprint: graduate, join or open a brick-and-mortar clinic, build a patient base and practice within four walls. While that path remains valuable, today's career landscape looks very different for those who want to explore alternative options.

As healthcare delivery is evolving and patient demographics are shifting, technology is unlocking new possibilities for how and where care is delivered, giving practicing Optometrists a new way to look at not only the needs of their patients, but also their own personal and professional preferences.

This new and modernized Optometry career has both seasoned ODs and new graduates exploring roles that allow them to practice outside the conventional retail or private practice model. And with an aging population that is growing every day, vision care demand continues to rise, especially among patients who live in skilled nursing facilities.

This trend is creating a broader, more dynamic Optometry career path, one that extends into mobile jobs, freelance jobs, and travel-based Optometry positions.

The Shifting Landscape of the Modern Optometry Career

The demand for accessible eye care has never been higher. The aging U.S. population is increasing rapidly, and with age comes a higher prevalence of chronic conditions affecting vision. According to Census.gov¹, the share of the population age 65 and older steadily increased from 12.4% in 2004 to 18.0% in 2024, with that number only expected to increase.

Therefore, a forward-thinking Optometry career that recognizes this trend and how it intersects with geriatric care, chronic disease management, and interdisciplinary collaboration is on the minds of many Optometrists, both seasoned and new grads, who want to chart a new course.

Senior living communities, skilled nursing facilities, and memory care units represent environments where residents frequently struggle to access outside appointments. For Optometrists, this growing need is reshaping what an Optometry career can look like.

Instead of waiting for patients to come to a clinic, providers are increasingly bringing care directly on-site through companies such as Aria Care Partners who have created a pathway for providers who want to

grow their careers while also embracing their love for the work they do in mobile Optometry positions, contract roles, and travel Optometry jobs.

Dr. Doug Streifel, Chief Medical Officer of Optometry at Aria Care Partners, "Mobile Optometry careers allow providers to deliver care to seniors where they are, transforming population shifts into opportunity and redefining how, where, and when eye care is delivered."

Technology Is Redefining the Optometry Career

Advances in portable diagnostic equipment have transformed what's possible in a mobile setting. Today's Optometrists can be supported by compact, high-quality tools that rival traditional exam setups.

Companies like Aria Care Partners empower their mobile providers with the tools that takes Optometry from the clinic, on the road, and into senior living communities across the country.

Key Portable Technologies Powering Mobile Care

- **Portable autorefractors:** These compact devices allow providers to quickly and accurately measure refractive error, even when space is limited or patients have mobility challenges.
- **Handheld slit lamps:** Lightweight and battery-powered, these tools enable anterior segment evaluation without requiring a fixed exam chair or large tabletop unit.
- **Portable tonometers:** Essential for glaucoma screening, portable tonometers allow intraocular pressure testing in bedside or wheelchair-accessible environments. In addition, this tool doesn't require drops or prolonged downtimes for patients, hence it's an ideal choice for remote optometry care.
- **Compact retinal cameras:** These devices capture high-quality fundus images, supporting early detection of retinal disease while facilitating remote review or specialist referral.

Cloud-based EHR systems further support this evolution, meaning that documentation, retinal imaging, and care coordination can happen seamlessly across facilities.

For providers interested in travel Optometry or freelance Optometrist work, technology removes many of the historical barriers that once limited flexibility within an Optometry career.

Healthcare Trends Driving Flexible Optometry Careers

Several macro-trends are shaping the future of Optometry careers, including the following key movers.

- **Aging Population and Chronic Disease Management:** As patients live longer, conditions such as cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and dry eye become more prevalent. A flexible Optometry career that includes mobile or contract work allows providers to proactively manage these chronic conditions within senior communities.
- **Increased Need for Accessible Care Delivery:** Transportation challenges, cognitive impairment, and physical limitations prevent many seniors from attending traditional clinic visits. A mobile Optometrist model reduces missed appointments and ensures consistent monitoring of progressive eye diseases.

- **Expansion of Optometry Services in Senior Care:** Companies like Aria Care Partners are expanding integrated care models in senior living communities. These partnerships create meaningful opportunities within a modern Optometry career, particularly for providers seeking contract or travel Optometry roles that blend autonomy with structured support.

New Pathways: Mobile, Freelance, and Travel Optometry

Today's Optometry career options extend far beyond practicing in a single location.

- **Mobile Optometry:** A mobile Optometrist travels to senior living communities and skilled nursing facilities to provide on-site exams. This model eliminates transportation barriers for residents while allowing providers to practice in a focused, patient-centered setting.
- **Freelance and 1099 Work:** Freelance Optometrist positions provide flexibility in workload, scheduling, and geographic coverage, creating an arrangement that supports provider independence and balance.
- **Travel Optometry:** Travel Optometry roles allow providers to offer temporary or contract coverage in various regions. Whether filling short-term staffing gaps or exploring new parts of the country, this path adds variety and professional growth.

Aria Care Partners facilitates these roles by coordinating logistics, patient scheduling, administrative processes, and providing the necessary tools for success, thus allowing providers to focus on patient care instead of operational burdens.

Dr. Doug Streifel, Chief Medical Officer of Optometry at Aria Care Partners, "Every day, we see how mobile Optometry is forging a new frontier, giving ambitious new graduates and seasoned professionals the freedom to explore new settings, travel, care for underserved populations, create their own schedules, and rediscover purpose in how and where they practice."

Benefits of Mobile and Freelance Optometry Careers

A modern Optometry career built around flexibility offers numerous advantages.

- **Predictable schedules:** Mobile and freelance Optometrist roles often provide defined facility days creating improved work-life balance.
- **Reduced overhead:** Freelance Optometrist models typically eliminate expenses like facility rent, utilities, and staffing payroll.
- **Diversified income streams:** Freelance Optometrist and travel Optometry roles can supplement traditional employment, offering additional revenue.
- **Reduced administrative burden:** When partner organizations like Aria Care Partners manage scheduling coordination and billing logistics, Optometrists can devote more energy to clinical care and patient education.
- **Focus on patient care instead of clinic operations:** Without managing front-desk workflows or inventory, providers can concentrate on diagnosis and education.

- **Strong clinical relationships with senior populations:** Recurring visits allow Optometrists to track progression of disease and build trust over time.
- **Opportunity to work across multiple settings:** Travel optometry and contract roles expose providers to varied patient demographics and care environments.
- **Commitment without compromise:** Contract arrangements allow adjustments in workload as life circumstances change.
- **Professional fulfillment in a reimagined Optometry career:** Beyond flexibility, many providers find renewed purpose in this evolving career path.
- **Helping patients maintain independence and mobility:** Clear vision directly supports fall prevention, medication management, and quality of life.
- **Preventing complications from untreated vision issues:** Early diagnosis of glaucoma or diabetic eye disease can preserve vision and reduce costly interventions.
- **Supporting interdisciplinary care teams:** Collaboration with nurses, physicians, and caregivers enhances whole-person care.
- **Opportunities for new graduates:** New grads may find that mobile Optometrist or travel Optometry positions offer rapid exposure to diverse pathology and real-world experience, strengthening clinical skills early in their Optometry career.

For many Optometrists, this model restores clinical meaning and reconnects them with patient-centered practice.

Ready to Make a Change?

If you're ready to expand your professional horizons, consider exploring mobile, freelance, or contract opportunities. The future of your Optometry career may extend well beyond the walls of a traditional clinic and into communities that need your expertise most.

To learn more about mobile, freelance Optometry positions at Aria Care Partners, connect with a recruitment specialist or explore current optometry jobs at ariacarepartners.com/careers/optometry-jobs.



References

¹Census.gov, United States Census Bureau, *Older Adults Outnumber Children in 11 States and Nearly Half of U.S. Counties*, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2025/older-adults-outnumber-children.html>